

REMARKS

This responds to the Office Action mailed March 28, 2003. Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1-10 are pending in the application, with claims 1, 7 and 10 being the independent claims.

Specification

An abstract has been presented.

Claims 1-6 have been amended to remove the term "characterised"

35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

The phrase "its own" has been deleted from the claims as recommended by the Examiner.

35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-6 stand rejected as being unpatentable over Suzuki in view of German 4,033,341.

At the outset, the applicant and the undersigned respectfully note that the German document is non-analogous art in that it relates solely to a two-piece wheel.

On its face, this distinction may seem insignificant to the Examiner, but even the Suzuki document describes the differences between one, two and three-piece wheels, wherein the latter allow for lighter weight wheel that are sufficiently rigid.

Owing to the relatively complex nature of a three-piece wheel, the applicant and undersigned respectfully submit that it is unfair to the applicant to rely upon the disclosure of a document that relates solely to a two-piece wheel, *especially where the German document does not include any disclosure or suggestion as to how its structure can be adapted to a three-piece wheel structure and where Suzuki, itself, carefully notes the important distinctions between one, two and three-piece wheel structures (see Suzuki at col. 1, lines 5-30).*

Turning to the substance of the rejection, it is respectfully submitted that even if the Suzuki and German documents are combined as proposed by the Examiner, amended claim 1 defines patentably over the proposed combination. Specifically, although Suzuki discloses a three-piece wheel, the structure of the wheel disclosed by Suzuki is criticized in the present application at page 1, lines 22-24 wherein it is noted, "In this wheel, the disc is partially inserted between the two parts of the rim so that all parts must have accurate dimensional precision." Also, because Suzuki requires use of bolts with nuts, *the bolts must be moved far radial inward relative to the tire-mounting groove location*, i.e., the structure of Suzuki is completely incompatible with that of the German document. As described at page 1, lines 22-24 referring to Suzuki (emphasis added), "The parts of the wheel, which are obtained by casting, are connected by screws with nuts and hence the screws are located at a certain radial distance from the tyre insertion groove." Neither Suzuki nor the German document provide any disclosure as to *how* the structure of the two-piece German wheel can be divided to define a three-piece wheel while maintaining

use of the coach screws of the German document. It is respectfully submitted that the combination of Suzuki and German as proposed by the Examiner is motivated by hindsight with the benefit of having read the present specification.

Based upon the foregoing comments, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is now in condition for allowance, along with claims 2-6 that depend therefrom.

Dependent Claim 2

In addition to the foregoing, it is respectfully noted that neither Suzuki nor the German document disclose or fairly suggest use of different materials for the components of a three-piece wheel as recited in amended claim 2. As such, it is respectfully submitted that claim 2 is in condition for allowance also for this reason.

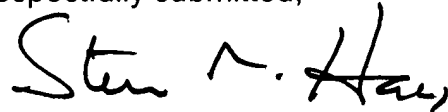
New Claims 7-10

New claims 7-10 are submitted to be in condition for allowance for at least the reasons noted above with respect to claims 1 and 2.

Conclusion

Based upon the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all claims define patentably over the documents of record and that this application meets all other statutory requirements. A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven M. Haas", written over a horizontal line.

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